

Internet Safety

Are your kids on the way to becoming more computer, Internet and cell phone savvy than you, or are they already there?

It's not unusual for today's youth to have a higher level of comfort with the remote control,TV gaming systems and computer software than their parents; but no matter how uncomfortable or inconvenient it may be to learn what they know, it's important.

If your child has a Facebook page or some other public social media profile, you should consider opening an account too, so you can monitor his posts and his friends.

Make sure your child doesn't share details online about his personal life or about the family that could later cause problems, or lead to danger. Warn your child not to post inappropriate or embarrassing pictures, language or other information online, for everyone to see. Companies and colleges routinely check social media profiles now as part of their application process. Your child should be mindful to post only positive information that again, is not too private in nature.

"Stranger danger" is real on the Internet. Some adults surf websites and pretend to be teens or tweens to befriend children. Make sure your child understands this threat and does not "friend" or communicate with anyone she does not personally know.

Consider putting parental control measures in place on your computer to prevent younger children from accessing inappropriate websites and older children from staying online too long. Parental control options are also available features on some video gaming systems and cable programs.

Bottom line: Stay engaged and alert and know what your children are up to. Your extra effort will teach them to be more responsible in this technological age and keep the parent/child lines of communication open.